

Slam Bidding

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaBidding/SlamBidding.pdf>

For more, see *Slam Bidding* at <http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/book-slambidding.htm>

Points

- Small Slam
 - balanced 33 (= $40 - (2*4) + 1$)

- Grand Slam (= $40 - (1*4) + 1$)
 - balanced 37 points

The Point Slider

Point Requirements for unbalanced hands

With a stiff opposite ace empty (Axxx) or opposite a suit with no honours (xxxx), 27 HCP's are needed for slam.

♠Axxx ♥AKxx ♦KQJx ♣x 17 HCP's
♠KQJx ♥xx ♣xxx ♣Axxx 10 HCP's

It is a 34 point deck- 3 suits and the Ace♣.

$$27 = 34 - (2*4) + 1$$

With the following 27 points, slam is down one.

♠Axxx ♥AKxx ♦KQJx ♣x 17 HCP's
♠KQJx ♥xx ♣xxx ♣KJxx 10 HCP's

With a void opposite a suit with no honours, 23 HCP's are needed for a small slam.

♠Axxx ♥AKxx ♦KQxxx ♣---

♠KQxx ♥Qxx ♣xx ♣xxxx

It is a 30 point deck

$$23 = 30 - (2*4) + 1$$

Two Balanced Hands

♠Axxx ♥AKx ♦KQx ♣xxx
♠KQJx ♥Qxx ♣xx ♣AKQx 16+ 17 = 33

With a five-card suit

♠Axxxx ♥AKx ♦KQx ♣xx
♠KQJx ♥Qxx ♣xx ♣AKxx 16 + 15 = 31

With a six-card suit

♠Axxxxx ♥AK ♦KQx ♣xx
♠KQJx ♥xxx ♣xx ♣AKxx 16 + 13 = 29

With a flat hand and a seven-card suit

♠Axxxxxx ♥AK ♦KQ ♣xx
♠KQJx ♥xxx ♣xx ♣AKxx 16 + 13 = 29

With an unbalanced hand and a eight-card suit

♠Axxxxxxx ♥AK ♦Kx ♣x
♠KQJx ♥xxx ♣Qx ♣Axxx 14 + 12 = 26

With a ten-card fit and balanced hands with same distribution

♠Axxxx ♥AKx ♦AKx ♣AKx
♠KQJxx ♥xxx ♣Qxx ♣xx 25 + 8 = 33

With a ten-card fit and unbalanced hands with different distribution

♠Axxxx ♥AKxx ♦xx ♣Ax
♠KQJxx ♥x ♣Axxxx ♣Kx 15 + 13 = 28

With a ten-card fit and all the queens and jacks

♠Axxxx ♥QJxx ♦QJ ♣Ax
♠KQJxx ♥K ♣AKxxx ♣QJ 14 + 19 = 33

if played by North, slam is cold

if played by South, slam is likely down on a club lead because West probably wont lead from a king against a slam.

With a double fit and no Quacks in the short suits

♠Axxxx ♥QJxx ♦xx ♣AK
♠KQJx ♥K10985 ♣AK ♣xx 14 + 16 = 30

With a double fit and Quacks in the short suits

♠Axxxx ♥QJxx ♦QJ ♣AK
♠KQJx ♥K10985 ♣AK ♣QJ 17 + 19 = 36

Each Hand Has a Void with no wasted honours

♠Axxxx ♥--- ♦xxxx ♣AKx
♠KQJx ♥xxxx ♣--- ♣QJxxx 11 + 9 = 20

Each Hand Has a Void with wasted honours

♠Axxxx ♥--- ♦KJxx ♣AKx
♠KQJx ♥KJxx ♣--- ♣QJxxx 15 + 13 = 28

Point Slider Summary

33 points is a typical point count for a small slam, but 30 points and higher is the slam ballpark. The points slide up or down depending on various factors.

- Points needed for a slam decrease with:
 - The presence of a five card suit
 - The presence of a six card or longer suit
 - double fit
 - no wasted honours
 - an ace or king opposite a doubleton
 - an ace opposite a singleton
 - no honours opposite a void
 - Touching Honours
 - Good intermediates
 - aces and kings not queens and jacks

- Points needed for a slam increase with:
 - a flat 4 triple 3 distribution
 - with flat hand opposite a flat hand
 - distribution mirrored in both hands
 - no 8-card or longer fits
 - wasted honours
 - any honour opposite a void
 - king, queen or jack opposite a singleton
 - a queen or jack opposite a doubleton
 - lots of queens and jacks
 - lots of small cards and not a lot of nines and tens.

Opening 2♣

1. 8.5 Quick Tricks

Count the tricks you can take without surrendering the lead

♠AKQJxxx ♥AQx ♦Kx ♣x

19 high card points

8.5 quick tricks

3 defensive tricks

♠	1
♥	1.5
♦	0.5
♣	0

2. 22+ HCP

♠AKxx ♥KJx ♦KQx ♣AKQ

3. Game in your hand

♠KQJ10xxx ♥KQJ10 ♦--- Ax

The System

People get into elaborate systems such as steps letting partner know how many controls they have. This is a waste of bidding space and may wrong-side a major-suit contract. Let the opener describe his hand and the responder places the contract appropriately. I recommend using 2♦ as waiting. Even showing a negative (2♥ as negative) hand is not worth the risk as it may wrong-side any heart contract. The weaker hand is best to just wait and give the 2♣ opener as much space as possible.

With my method, game is bid most of the time when a partner opens 2♣. No system is perfect.

Responses to 2♣

The Only Responses to 2♣ are Waiting and Positive Responses

- 2♣ 2♦ Waiting
- 2♣ 2♥ Positive Response in ♥'s
- 2♣ 2♠ Positive Response in ♠'s
- 2♣ 3♣ Positive Response in ♣'s
- 2♣ 3♦ Positive Response in ♦'s

Positive response shows the following:

- 2 of the top 3 honours
- 5-card major or a 6-card minor
- at least one outside high-card control
 - an ace is 2 controls
 - a king is 1 control

Second Negative

The cheapest suit at the three level tells partner to place the final contract because the next bid he will make will be a pass. It is recommended to allow the 2♣ opener to pass out an auction, not the responder unless the opener has rebid a notrump.

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 2♣ | 2♦ | 2♣ | 2♦ | 2♣ | 2♦ | 2♣ | 2♦ |
| 2♥ | 3♣ | 2♠ | 3♣ | 3♣ | 3♦ | 3♦ | 3♥ |

Opener Rebids

2♣	2♦	
2♥		5+ ♥'s
2♠		5+ ♠'s
2NT	22-24	balanced, no singletons (except K) and no voids
3♣		6+ ♣'s and likely a void or singleton
3♦		6+ ♦'s and likely a void or singleton
3♥		a one loser ♥ suit opposite a singleton -trump is ♥'s
3♠		a one loser ♠ suit opposite a singleton -trump is ♠'s
3NT	25-27	balanced, no singletons (except K) and no voids
4NT	28+	balanced, no singletons (except K) and no voids
No other bid exists		

Ace Asking

Notrump

Gerber

ONTO

Over Notrump Openings

1NT 4♣

4♦ 0 or 4 aces

4♥ 1 ace

4♠ 2 aces

4NT 3 aces

1NT 4♣

4_ 5♣

5♦ 0 or 4 kings

5♥ 1 king

5♠ 2 kings

5NT 3 kings

Because one can always sign off in 5NT, asking for kings does not promise that the partnership has all the aces.

The only other Gerber sequences are:

2NT 4♣

2♣ 2♦

2♣ 2♦

2♣ 2♦

2NT 4♣

3NT 5♣

4NT 5♣

Suit

Regular Blackwood
passé

Roman Keycard Blackwood

The keycards are the king of trump and the four aces

If there is no agreed trump, the king of the last bid natural suit is a keycard.

Roman Keycard Blackwood is used when one is in the slam neighbourhood and it just makes sure the defenders cannot embarrass the declaring side by cashing two aces. Any form of Blackwood except exclusion Blackwood is not useful when the asking player has:
a worthless doubleton (use cuebidding) or
a void (use cuebidding or exclusion Blackwood)

Furthermore, one does not need one keycard to use any form of Blackwood because one can still know they are in the slam ballpark without any keycards.

0314

1♠	4NT	
5♣		0 or 3 keycards
5♦		1 or 4 keycards
5♥		2 or 5 keycards without the queen
5♠		2 or 5 keycards with the queen

1♠	4NT	
5_	5NT	
6♣		0 kings
6♦		1 king
6♥		2 kings
6♠		3 kings

After one uses 4NT asking for keycards, 5NT asks for kings with the intention of bidding a grand. This promises all the keycards including the queen of trump. There are only three kings because the king of trump is a keycard.

Other Variations

Queen Ask

After partner has replied with 5♣ or 5♦, the very next suit asks for the queen of trump. The immediate first step is no and the step after that is yes.

1430

One needs more room for the queen ask (if the trump is not ♠'s) if partner has one not zero keycards.

1♠	4NT	
5♣		1 or 4 keycards
5♦		0 or 3 keycards
5♥		2 or 5 keycards without the queen
5♠		2 or 5 keycards with the queen
5NT		2 keycards with a void not in a working suit. a working suit is any of partner's suits.

Example

1♥	4NT	
5♣		1 or 4 keycards
	5♦	Do you have the queen?
5♥		No
5♠		Yes

By the way, 4NT directly over 1♠ is rare. One usually uses the room to investigate for slam. J2NT is often a good start

Slam Forces

Slam Force

1♥ 5♥

Pass without 2 out of the top three trump honours

6♥ with 2 out of the top three trump honours

Grand Slam Force

1NT 5NT

6NT with a minimum

7NT with a maximum or a good 16

1♥ 5NT

6♥ with 1 out of the top three trump honours

7♥ with 2 out of the top three trump honours

Specific Kings

Instead of 5NT asking for the number of kings, it asks partner to bid his lower ranking king. Partner bids 6 of the agreed trump suit with no kings.

If one uses specific kings then the queen ask also uses specific kings. When one says yes to the Queen ask, one bids his lower ranking king or 5NT with the queen of trump and two kings and six of the agreed trump suit with the queen and no kings.

Exclusion Blackwood

a jump to the five-level asks for keycards excluding the suit jumped to.

1♠ 5♣ how many keycards excluding the ace♣?

1♠ 5♦ how many keycards excluding the ace♦?

1♠ 5♥ how many keycards excluding the ace♥?

1♥ 4♠ how many keycards excluding the ace♠?

1♥ 5♣ how many keycards excluding the ace♣?

1♥ 5♦ how many keycards excluding the ace♦?

Minor Wood

1♣ 4♣ 1430 in ♣'s

1♦ 4♦ 1430 in ♦'s

Pass and Pull

In competitive auctions, passing in direct seat and then pulling partner's penalty double shows slam interest, i.e. a singleton or void in opponent's suit.

W	N	E	S	
1♥	1♠	2♠	4♠	2♠ shows ♥ support and a limit+ hand
P	P	Dbf	P	West's pass is a forcing pass-East may not pass
5♥	P	6♥	All Pass	

Example

♠AKx ♥AQxx ♦AQxx ♣xx
♠Qx ♥KJxx ♦KJ ♣AQxxx

Using Keycard and number of kings:

N	S
1♦	1♥
2♠	3♣
3♥	4NT
5♣	5♦
5♠	5NT
6♦	6NT

Lets go through the bidding

North has 19 HCP and no 5-card major so he opens his better minor, 1♦. South has four ♥'s and not five ♠'s so he bids 1♥. North makes an artificial jump shift to 2♠ showing 18+ and putting a game force on.

South shows his ♣ suit and North makes a ♥ raise. This is not delayed support because North had to make a jump shift first. A delayed raise shows one less card than a direct raise would show. However North is showing 4 ♥'s not 3 ♥'s.

South decides to ask for keycards and North shows 0 or 3. South knows for a fact it is 3. South has ♠Qx ♥KJxx ♦KJ ♣AQxxx. If North has 0 keycards, his hand must be: ♠KJ ♥Q ♦Q ♣KJ which gives North 11 points not his 18+.

South bids the next suit up asking for the queen of trump and North says he has it by skipping a rung on the bidding ladder with a 5♠ bid. South then asks for kings. This is an automatic bid when the partnership holds all the keycards including thye queen of trump. North now knows they have all the keycards and tells partner he has one king. One never asks for kings without all the keycards. This is not the case for Gerber because one can still sign-off in 5NT.

South cannot count to 13 and signs off in 6NT, They have 13 tricks and 7NT is cold. The person who played this against me took the club finesse trying for a 14 trick settling for 12 tricks.

Using Cuebidding:

1♦ 1♥
 2♠ 3♣
 3♥ 4♣ 3♥ starts the cuebidding
 4♣ shows 1st round ♣ control and denies 1st round ♠ control.
 4♦ 5♦ 4♦ shows 1st round ♦ control and
 5♦ shows 2nd round ♦ control and no other first or second round controls.

Using Italian-Style Cuebidding:

1♦ 1♥
 2♠ 3♣
 3♥ 4♣ 3♥ starts the cuebidding
 4♣ shows 1st or 2nd round ♣ control and denies 1st and 2nd round ♠ control.
 4♦ 4NT 4♦ shows 1st or 2nd round ♦ control and implies spade control because slam would be pointless with two ♠ quick losers. 4NT verifies 1st and 2nd round controls, etc.

Using Keycard and Specific Kings:

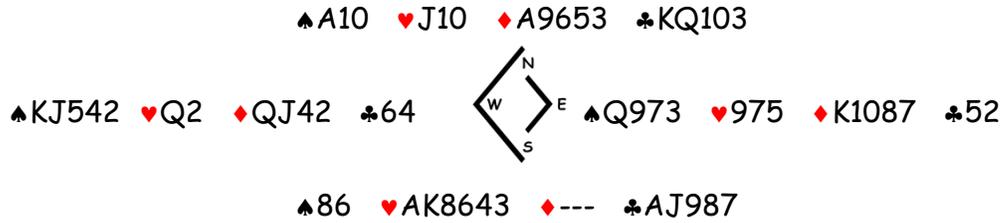
When one has a void or a worthless doubleton or when one is the weaker hand, one tries to coax partner into asking for keycards.

N	S	
1♦	1♥	
2♠	3♣	
3♥	4♣	South shows a strong slam interest by showing 1st round ♣ control
4NT	5♥	
5NT	6♦	5NT shows all the keycards 6♦ shows the king of diamonds and denies the king of ♣'s
6NT	7NT	South with two queens and a five card suit can bump the contract to 7NT

Board 26

East Dealer

Both Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
	P	1♥	1♠
2♦	3♠	4♣	P
4♦	P	4♥	All Pass

Opening Lead:

Traveller N-S E-W

4♥S+2 -680 .5 out of 4 matchpoints

Analysis:

They missed an easy slam-ridiculous we got almost a zero

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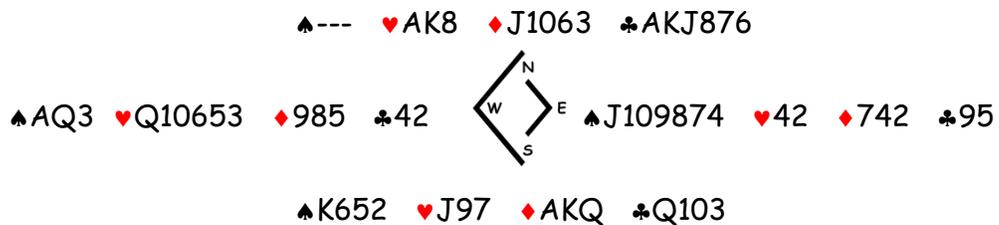
26>	3	-	0	2	2	3-	-	1	4	3-
	-640*	-680*	600	-650*	650	680	-680*	640	-600*	680

Board 24

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West Dealer

None Vulnerable



N	E	S	W
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Opening Lead:

Traveller N-S E-W

6♣N +1 +940 3 out of 4 matchpoints

6♣Nx+1 1190

5♣N+2 440

3NTN+3 490 (2x)

Asking For Third Round Control

After you ask for keycards and bypass the King Ask, new suit at the six-level asks for 3rd round control. Six of the trump suit says No, 6NT says Qxx and Seven of the trump suit says xx.